

WAC 208-620-630 What are some of the advertising restrictions I must comply with? (1) Licensees are prohibited from advertising with envelopes or stationery, or using images in an electronic format, that are designed to resemble a government mailing or other method of communication that suggest an affiliation that does not exist. Some examples of emblems or government-like names, language, or nonexistent affiliations that will violate the state and federal advertising laws include, but are not limited to:

(a) Characterizing products as "government loan programs," "government-supported loans," or other words that may mislead a consumer into believing that the government is guaranteeing, endorsing, or supporting the advertised loan product. Using the words "FHA loan," "VA loan," or words for other products that are in fact endorsed or sponsored by a federal, state, or local government entity is allowed.

(b) An official-looking emblem such as an eagle, the Statue of Liberty, or a crest or seal that resembles one used by any state or federal government agency.

(c) Envelopes or electronic communications designed to resemble official government communications, such as IRS or U.S. Treasury envelopes, or other government mailers or electronic communications.

(d) Warnings or notices citing government codes or form numbers not required by the U.S. Postmaster to be shown on the communication.

(e) The use of the term "official business," or similar language implying official or government business, without also including the name of the sender.

(f) Any suggestion or representation that the licensee is, or is affiliated with, a state or federal agency, municipality, bank, savings bank, trust company, savings and loan association, building and loan association, credit union, or other entity that it does not actually represent.

(2) **When I am advertising interest rates, the act requires me to conspicuously disclose the annual percentage rate (APR) implied by the rate of interest. What does it mean to "conspicuously" disclose the APR?** The required disclosures in your advertisement must be reasonably understandable. Consumers must be able to see, read, or hear, and understand the information. Many factors, including the size, duration, and location of the required disclosures, and the background or other information in the advertisement, can affect whether the information is clear and conspicuous. This requirement applies to all mandatory disclosures. The presentation of the disclosure of the APR must be at least equivalent to the presentation of any other rates disclosed in the advertisement.

(3) **The act prohibits me from advertising an interest rate unless that rate is actually available at the time of the advertisement. How may I establish that an advertised interest rate was "actually available" at the time it was advertised?** Whenever a specific interest rate is advertised, the licensee must retain a copy of supporting rate information, and the APR calculation for the advertised interest rate.

(4) **Must I quote the annual percentage rate when discussing rates with a borrower?** Yes. You must quote the annual percentage rate and other terms of the loan if you give an oral quote of an interest rate to the borrower. TILA's Regulation Z, 12 C.F.R., Part 226.26 provides guidance for using the annual percentage rate in oral disclosures.

(5) **May a licensee advertise rates or fees as the "lowest" or "best"?** No. Rates described as "lowest," "best," or other similar words cannot be proven to be actually available at the time they are advertised.

(6) **May I solicit using advertising that suggests or represents that I am affiliated with a state or federal agency, municipality, federally insured financial institution, trust company, building and loan association, when I am not; or that I am an entity other than who I am?** No. It is an unfair and deceptive act or practice and a violation of the act for you to suggest or represent that you are affiliated with a state or federal agency, municipality, federally insured financial institution, trust company, building and loan association, or other entity you do not actually represent; or to suggest or represent that you are any entity other than who you are.

(7) **If I advertise using a borrower's current loan information, what must I disclose about that information?** When an advertisement includes information about a borrower's current loan that you did not obtain from a solicitation, application, or loan, you must provide the borrower with the name of the source of the information.

(8) **Is it a violation to advertise that services or items are "free" when the licensee has paid for the services or items?** Yes. Advertising using the term "free," or any other similar term or phrase that implies there is no cost to the applicant is deceptive because you can recover the cost of the purportedly "free" service or item through the negotiation process. See the Federal Trade Commission's *Guide Concerning Use of the Word "Free" and Similar Representations* (16 C.F.R. Sec. 251.1(g) (2003)), available at <https://www.ftc.gov/enforcement/rules/rulemaking-regulatory-reform-proceedings/guide-concerning-use-word-free-similar>.

(9) **How can I advertise a discounted rate?** You must clearly and conspicuously disclose in the advertisement at a minimum, the cost of the discount to the borrower and that the rate is discounted.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040 and 31.04.165. WSR 19-21-157, § 208-620-630, filed 10/22/19, effective 11/24/19. Statutory Authority: Chapter 43.320 RCW, RCW 31.04.165. WSR 16-08-026, § 208-620-630, filed 3/30/16, effective 4/30/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040 and 31.04.165. WSR 13-24-024, § 208-620-630, filed 11/22/13, effective 1/1/14; WSR 12-18-047, § 208-620-630, filed 8/29/12, effective 11/1/12. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040, 31.04.165 and 2010 c 35. WSR 10-20-122, § 208-620-630, filed 10/5/10, effective 11/5/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040, 31.04.165, 2009 c 120, and 2009 c 149. WSR 09-24-090, § 208-620-630, filed 12/1/09, effective 1/1/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040, 19.144.070, 2008 c 78. WSR 09-01-159, § 208-620-630, filed 12/23/08, effective 1/23/09. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.320.040. WSR 08-15-125, § 208-620-630, filed 7/22/08, effective 8/22/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 31.04.165, 31.04.015, 31.04.045, 31.04.075, 31.04.085, 31.04.093, 31.04.102, 31.04.115, 31.04.145, 31.04.155, and 31.04.175. WSR 06-04-053, § 208-620-630, filed 1/27/06, effective 2/27/06.]